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STATEWIDE CRIME STATISTICS RELEASED Drug Arrests Up but Meth Arrests Down

BISMARCK – Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem today released North Dakota's crime statistics for 2005. The report is compiled from information provided by local law enforcement agencies across the state.

While total drug arrests increased by 8.7 percent in 2005, arrests for the drug category which includes meth decreased by 45 percent, from 477 in 2004 to 260 in 2005. "We are already seeing the effect of tough legislation passed in 2005 restricting purchases of cold medicines," said Stenehjem. "Meth cooks can't get what they need to make meth. New federal laws, which took effect earlier this year, will make it even harder for criminals to manufacture meth." Stenehjem also cited the reduction in meth lab busts – down more than eighty percent from 2005 – proves the legislation was necessary and is effective.

The state is ranked as the safest state in the nation for violent crime per capita. The "violent crime" category includes murder, rape, robbery and assault. "Although the number of violent crimes has increased by 13.6 percent over last year, violent crimes still comprise less than five percent of total crimes reported, allowing North Dakota to keep its position as the safest state in the nation," said Stenehjem.

Violent crime comprised just 4.8 percent of the total index offenses reported. The total number of violent crimes reported was 600, an increase of 13.6 percent from the 528 violent crimes reported in 2004, and the largest increase since 2000. One-quarter of those arrested for violent crimes were juveniles.

There were thirteen murders in 2005, up from 10 in 2004. Twelve of the thirteen identified assailants were male. Of the thirteen murders, five involved domestic violence. Eleven victims were adults. Five adult victims died as a result of a beating.

Property crimes accounted for 95.2 percent of the total index offenses reported in 2005. The number of property crimes increased 3.6 percent from the 2004 total of 11,545 to 11,963 in 2005. Almost \$12 million dollars worth of property was reported stolen in 2005.

In 2005, 12,563 crime index offenses were reported by local law enforcement agencies, a 4.1 percent increase from 2004. The total number of arrests reported increased from 29,372 in 2004 to 30,759 in 2005. "Crime index" offenses include the violent crimes of murder/non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault, and the property crimes of burglary, theft and motor vehicle theft. Juveniles accounted for approximately 21 percent of total arrests and 41 percent of crime index offense arrests.